



DRINKING WATER PROTECTION IN NEW YORK AND PUERTO RICO

S.C.Delaney/U.S.EPA

Few things have as direct an impact on your health as the water you drink. For this reason, drinking water safety continues to be one of the EPA's top priorities. As part of the continuing effort to maintain clean drinking water, the EPA spot checks public water systems for purity. During the summer of 1995, the EPA and its state partners undertook such a study, examining surface waters in the State of New York and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico for cryptosporidium and giardia. These two biological agents are among the most common causes of water system infection.

The audit results indicated that more rigorous protection is needed. In New York State, for example, 43 percent of treated water contained detectable levels of cryptosporidium and giardia. In Puerto Rico, 14 percent of the principal water supplier's product contained at least one of these biological agents. At low levels, these contaminants do not pose problems for healthy individuals; however, sensitive populations such as infants and the elderly, may have more difficulty fighting off even small amounts of these agents. Because even one illness is too many, the EPA continues to strive toward national drinking water solutions.

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